FPA Preparedness System Preparedness Module
RFP Questions/Responses

1. RFP Section: 1.1 Project Background and Introduction. Page #: 6. Question: Will any state or local agencies be involved in, or be stakeholders in, the business process re-engineering or other aspects of this project?

States are FPA Preparedness Module stakeholders. Please refer to the stakeholders list located at RFP Appendix C, which describes the level of interest of each stakeholder.

State and local agencies may not be directly involved in the business process reengineering. The business process reengineering will be driven by the five federal wildland fire agencies.

2. RFP Section: 1.1.1 Business Need. Page #: 6. Question: The legacy systems have been identified in the SOW, but are there known systems/applications to which the envisioned FPA Preparedness Module will be pushing/pulling data? If so, what are these systems/applications based in – e.g. Oracle, COBOL, C++, etc.

The FPA Preparedness Module may pull data from the following applications:

- Personal Computer Historical Analysis (PCHA) (Visual Basic, MS Access)
- FireFamilyPlus (Visual Basic, MS Access) (see www.fs.fed.us/fire/planning/nist, Application Information)
- Fire Management Information System (Cold Fusion, SQL Server)

Additionally, as stated in RFP Section 1.5.5, the "Preparedness Module should employ data standards that will facilitate future integration with GIS data and technology." Therefore the FPA system interfaces must be designed to provide the capability to pull GIS data. The five federal wildland fire agencies use ESRI GIS software.

3. RFP Section: 1.1.2 (1.3.6) Project Objectives for the Preparedness Module. Page #: 9 (15). Question: SOW states as two of the objectives of the FPA Preparedness Modules on page 9 to:

- **Establish a Help Desk for the user community and ensure it is operational.**
- **Implement a Service Level Agreement for ongoing maintenance and support.**

Yet on page 15, in Section 1.3.6, User support and system maintenance is listed as "Related Items Outside this Task Order Scope"

Please clarify as to whether the Help Desk, SLA and maintenance cost and resources should be included in our submittal.

Also, should the Help Desk and SLAs be determined to be part of this RFP and project, please clarify the levels to be costed, e.g. level of support – 24/7/365; hours of response and support priorities, (priority 1 must be responded to in 2 hours, etc.), etc.

While the FPA project has long term objectives to establish user support and systems maintenance, these are not objectives of this task order. However, user support during beta testing is a requirement of this task order and should be described in the technical approach section of the proposal.

Since long term user help desk and service level agreement are not part of this task order, the level of support does not need to be defined. It is assumed that the offerors will be intent on providing quick and thorough response during the beta tests.

Also included in this task order is 60 days of deployment support. A Help Desk during this period should be maintained from Monday through Friday (excluding government holidays) from 9 am Eastern Standard

Time (EST) to 4:30 pm Pacific Standard Time (PST). High Priority requests must be responded to within 4 hours of receipt. The offeror's technical approach should propose response and support time categories and response times for non-High Priority requests.

4. Section: 1.1.2. Page: 08. Reference: 3rd bulleted item. As a multi agency initiative, we assume that this help desks will operate independently from other agencies help facilities. Is that correct?

Yes. Please see the answer to question 3.

5. Current Processes- Is there a preference for continuing the Simulation Approach or Rule Based Approach?

One of the legacy applications (IIAA) utilizes a simulation approach to modeling initial attack success. The initial attack simulation model will be replaced by an optimization approach (see Appendix J). One of the inputs to the optimization model is fire size and perimeter. Fire size and perimeter will be simulated using elements of the Fire Behavior Prediction System (BEHAVE) (see question 42 below). So from this standpoint, simulation will still be used by FPA but not for predicting initial attack success.

Two of the legacy applications (FirePro and FireBase) use a rule based approach for determining the initial attack organization as well as the fire program management overhead. FPA will use rule bases similar to those used by FirePro and FireBase to conduct post-optimization analysis to determine appropriate, consistent levels of fire program management based on the initial attack organizations determined by the optimization model.

6. What is the "target user" in terms of numbers, skills, and distribution?

The Final RFP was updated to include this information. Please refer to Section 1.3.1, Business Context, and Section 1.5.14, Task #14: Develop and Conduct User Training.

7. RFP Section: 1.3.2 Functionality. Page #: 12. Question: Regarding the statement "The requirements detailed in the Business Use Case Model are under development and have been since October 1, 2002. Requirements development will continue until contract award and will be made available at that time." – what is the anticipated contractor LOE for the awarded team to finalize the business logic, rules, re-engineering, etc.? This is of concern due to the: 1) number of affected groups and agencies for input, coordination and agreement, and 2) development schedule which could be negatively affected.

At the time of contract award, there will have been approximately 8 experienced system/functional analyst staff-months of effort devoted to definition of the initial system architecture and definition of requirements. The estimate of remaining level of effort should be based upon the expected maturity of the requirements based upon this level of effort expended.

The government does not expect the input, coordination, and agreement time schedule to be an issue since it will not require the response of a large review panel. The various agencies will be represented by the FPA Core Team (see Appendix F, FPA Project Charter) who are designated as full time members of the FPA Project.

8. Additionally, the overall utilization of a large review panel from the various Departments and Agencies is of concern. Will there be an established Review Cycle Time or Response Time? For example, if a report, or request for clarification is submitted by the vendor, can the vendor expect a response within three days, five

days, etc.? Otherwise the vendor may be held to a timeline that could be adversely affected waiting for a response.

The day-to-day requests for information or clarification will not require the response of a large review panel. The FPA Core Team (see Appendix F, FPA Project Charter) members are designated as full time members of the FPA Project. The response time for a request will vary by the nature and complexity of the request. Nominally, the contractor can expect a response to a request within five working days.

9. A large review panel will also add risk in regards to Section 1.12 Quality Control and Quality Assurance, pages 26-27. An established, and documented, "acceptance and measurement" plan should be jointly agreed upon by all of the various Departments and Agencies representatives and the vendor beforehand to make sure everyone is striving toward the same goal, and "compliance" is jointly understood.

Please see the response to question 8. As with requests for information, the government does not anticipate that a large review panel will be employed to review and accept deliverables. The government concurs that an "acceptance and measurement" plan should be jointly agreed upon by the FPA Project Team and the contractor.

10. What tool was used for the Use Cases presented?

The Use Cases were developed using MS Visio and MS Word. There are plans to migrate the information to Popkin System Architect.

11. Does the government have a preferred modeling/CASE tool for analysis? i.e. SilverRun, Rational Rose, Designer, Erwin etc.

No, the government does not have a preferred modeling tool for analysis. Although it should be noted that both BLM and FS enterprise architectures are using Popkin System Architect. The offeror's technical approach should recommend and provide rationale for any proposed CASE tools.

12. RFP Section: 1.3.2 Functionality. Page #: 13. Question: Regarding the existing applications outlined in this section, are there any maintenance, licensing or other costs associated with these applications? If so, what are they? The answer will affect how costing is submitted in regards to the statement on page 31, RFP Section 2.5 Ownership of Developed System, "The contractor may recommend commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) or other previously developed software components to support special functions within the application. The contractor shall be responsible for providing an estimate of initial and on-going cost relating to appropriate licensing for the intended use and maintenance." – should the decision be made to utilize/re-use any part of any of the existing applications.

The six applications listed are government owned. Therefore, for the most part, there are no licensing or other cost issues regarding these applications. The possible exception involves IIAA and is described on Page 2 of 49 in the Interagency Initial Attack Analysis (IIAA) Containment Model and Database Technical Documentation report located at Appendix D.

13. Section: 1.3.2. Page: 12. Reference: 1st paragraph. Does this mean that the legacy systems are to be the initial population sources for FPA? Or do they remain as feeders for FPA? See (question 4).

The legacy systems; Interagency Initial Attack Analysis (IIAA) System, FirePro, and FireBase may serve as initial population sources for the FPA Preparedness Module. These systems will ultimately be replaced by the FPA System. Data migration routines for relevant data to be migrated from IIAA, FirePro, and FireBase are a requirement under Task #12, Develop Data Migration Routines.

Personal Computer Historical Analysis (PCHA), FIRESTAT, DOI 1202, and (see www.fs.fed.us/fire/planning/nist, Application Information) may remain as feeder systems for the FPA System.

14. RFP Section: 1.3.4 Tasks. Page #: 14. Question: Although we understand the issues with budgeting at this point in time, since only Task 1 is mentioned to be funded, there is a huge risk that staffing continuity may not be available if there is a break in the development cycle before Task 2 is started. If there are breaks due to funding, we would request special consideration be given in regards to the verbiage in Section, 2.12 KEY PERSONNEL, since some or all of the original personnel represented in the bid submittal, and the original team that has worked on Task 1, may not be available.

The government fully expects initial funding to be available to adequately fund the project so that no such break occurs. If there are unanticipated breaks in the schedule due to funding during the first 90 days of contract performance, the contractor may substitute key personnel according to the post 90-day procedures outlined in RFP Section 2.12, Key Personnel.

15. Section 1.3.5, last bullet. What is the Rollout Plan? Please clarify.

The Rollout Plan is not a requirement of this Task Order. The government is responsible for developing the referenced Rollout Plan. However, the contractor will provide input to the Rollout Plan based on Task 10, Prepare FPA System and User Documentation; Task 12, Develop Data Migration Routines; Task 13 Deliver FPA Preparedness Module; and Task 14, Develop and Conduct User Training.

16. The RFP states: "Subject matter experts will be made available to the contractor as needed and according to the mutually agreed project plan (see Task #1)." What percent of the subject matter expert's time will be available to the contractor when interaction (meetings and one-on-one) is required and how much advance schedule notification will be required prior to each period of interaction?

The FPA Core Team (see Appendix F, FPA Project Charter) members are designated as full time members of the FPA Project. As indicated in Section 1.8, Communications, "close day-to-day interaction" is anticipated between the Core Team and the contractor. Utilization of additional Subject Matter Experts will likely occur over the course of the project and may require advanced coordination for meetings or sessions.

17. Section: 1.5.6. Page: 18. Reference: Sub-task 6.1; paragraph 1; last sentence. Is it the Forest Service's intent that this sub-task develop data migration requirements which will subsequently be developed under Task 12?

Yes.

18. Section: 1.5.11. Page: 22. Can the Forest Service provide an estimate of the number of sites that are to be included for beta testing?

The FPA Project Team estimates that there will be four or five beta test sites.

19. Section: 1.5.12. Page: 23. There are no software deliverables from this task identified in the list of deliverables. Is this correct or was a deliverable inadvertently omitted?

There are several software deliverables listed in Section 1.5.16, Deliverables. Software deliverables include:

- Task 6 – Optimization Model
- Task 7 – Functional User Interface
- Task 8 – System Reports and Outputs
- Task 9 – National Database
- Task 13 – FPA Preparedness Module

Additionally, another software deliverable will result from Task 12 – Data Migration Routines. This deliverable shall be concurrent with the Task 12 FPA Preparedness Module Data Migration Plan deliverable.

20. Section: 1.5.16. Page: 25. Reference: Task 14 Deliverable. Is 2/7/05 meant to be completion of last of the 5 training sessions?

Yes, the Deliverable Calendar lists the date that training is expected to be completed.

21. Section: 1.5.16. Page: 25. Reference: Task 13 Deliverable. We assume that the 1/31/05 applies to the completion of deployment and that the 60 days support begins on that date. Is that correct?

Yes, the 60 days deployment support will begin on the date that the FPA Preparedness Module is accepted.

22. Does the government intend to provide government furnished computer facilities, equipment and software for centralized functions of the deployed application (i.e., the National Database)?

Yes, the government will provide computer facilities, equipment and software as necessary for centralized functions.

23. RFP Section: 1.7 Hardware, Software & Supplies. Page #: 25. Question: In previous experience with the Forest Service and DOI projects, there has been specialized operating systems and versions of applications created/manipulated for the FS/DOI – will these be made available to the development staff so we are all in sync for development, production, etc?

Yes, FS/DOI specialized operating systems and software versions will be provided as necessary in the development of the FPA Preparedness Module.

24. Page 23 Hardware, Software, supplies. Is the government expecting the contractor to specify the production hardware and software to be purchased by the Government for FPA? If so, (we) would include the hardware/software cost(s) as it applies to each task. If the hardware/software cannot be associated with a specific task, which task would the Government prefer the costs be included in?

This information should be specified in the offeror's technical approach and the associated costs should be applied to the appropriate task. If the costs cannot be associated with a specific cost, the offeror should include the costs as a separate line item.

25. Section 1.8. Page: 26. This section references weekly conference call between the contractor and project team. Can we assume that the conference calls will be limited to technical personnel or will it include other like the Contracting Officer, the Task Order Inspector? Please identify participants?

The conference calls may include any parties relevant to the planned topics of the call.

26. Page 25. Performance Measurements. The Corrective Action Column indicates that the Contractor should perform rework at no cost to the Government. Because of the many stakeholders for FPA, many of the deliverables will require government comment and input before they can become final. How does the government intend to implement the corrective action clauses for draft deliverables.

The Final RFP has been updated to address this concern. The Corrective Action clause is not applicable to Draft deliverables.

27. Section: 2.2. Page: 29. Please elaborate on the role and responsibilities of the Project Inspector.

As stated in RFP section 2.2, "A formal letter of appointment of each Inspector will be provided to the contractor that further details the Inspector's role and responsibilities." This information will be provided when and if each Inspector is designated.

28. Section: 2.3. Page: 29. Will a formal letter of appointment be issued for the change Management board?

No, the government does not see a need for formal letters of appointment for the Change Management Board. RFP Section 2.3 identifies the Board members and describes the Change Management Process.

29. Section: 2.4. Page: 30. Please clarify how deliverables will be made and what are the deliverable acceptance criteria.

In addition to Section 2.4 Acceptance of Deliverables, the RFP provides additional information regarding deliverables and deliverable quality standards. Please refer to RFP Section 1.5.16, Deliverables, for a list of deliverables and standard format. Please refer to RFP Section 1.12, Quality Control and Quality Assurance, for quality standards and means of measurement. Additionally, the offeror's technical proposal should elaborate on how deliverables will be made and how quality will be assured.

30. RFP Section: 3.1.1 Technical Proposal. Page #: 38-39. Question: Regarding the statement "In addition, the proposal must provide the same information for each proposed major subcontracted area of work including name, address, and point of contact for each proposed subcontractor and their relevant qualifications and experience." Please define "major subcontracted" – for example, major would be defined as performing over 35% of overall LOE? This is a concern due to the page limitation. If we have a subcontractor, but they will only be performing perhaps <20% of the overall LOE, and we need to have them supply five past performances, etc., we would commit a significant number of overall page count to two sets of past performance info.

Offerors shall submit a minimum of five past performance references total for the entire proposed team. This is a change in the previous requirement of five references for each team member. The government will reserve to right to request additional past performance references during the proposal evaluation period. The government maintains the previously stated 50 page limit for the offeror's technical proposal.

31. The RFP has a limit of 50 pages. Due to the limit on pages is the government looking to have 5 quals/references from each member of our team or a total of five qualifications total?

Please see the response to question 30.

32. Section: 3.1.1. Page: 37. We believe it is the Government's intent that there be a total of five references per proposal and that those five references include a mix of prime and subcontractor references. Is that correct?

Please see the response to question 30.

33. The solicitation places a 50 page limit on the response. Is the requirement such that all information pertaining to prime and subcontractor references, as well as personnel resumes, be included within the 50 pages or will the government allow this information to be included as an appendix.

Please see the response to question 30 regarding prime and subcontractor references. The five required references must be included as part of the Technical Proposal.

As stated in RFP Section 3.2, profiles (biographical sketches) or resumes must be included for key personnel. These profiles or resumes must also be included in the Technical Proposal.

34. Section 3.1.1 Technical Proposal. page limit. We believe that additional pages are necessary to fully respond to the technical approach for each of the 14 tasks and to provide sufficient level of detail for proposed innovations. Would it be possible for the government to increase the page count to 75? In addition, we suggest that the resumes not be counted towards the page limit.

Please see the responses to questions 30 and 33.

35. Section 3.1.1 Technical Proposal, page size restriction. The 8-1/2 page size significantly constrains the ability to adequately portray the architecture in a meaningful manner. Is it possible to use foldouts in this proposal, if they count as 2 pages?

The offerors may use foldouts that do not exceed 11x17 inch paper. Any pages that are larger than 8-1/2x11 inches will count as two pages for the purpose of the page count limitation.

36. Could you please let us know if we can include/use paper lager than 8.5X11 inch paper, e.g., 11X14, in our proposal?

Please see the response to question 35.

37. What type of background information is the government looking for in regards to key personnel?

The proposal should provide any information that the offeror deems appropriate in order to demonstrate the suitability of the key personnel for the proposed positions. Please refer to RFP Section 3.2, Evaluation Factors, and RFP Section 2.12, Key Personnel, for specific requirements. Also see the response to question 33.

38. Is there a standard format that the government would like for the references?

There is not a specific format for past performance references. However, Section 3.1.1, Technical Proposal, lists the information that must be provided for each reference.

39. RFP Section: 3.2 Evaluation Factors. Page #: 42. Question: Although pricing is listed as the lowest factor in evaluation, how will the costing be evaluated since only Task 1 is considered non-optional? For example, will all submittals be rated against each other only based on Task 1, or for a certain percentage of the costing evaluation (e.g. 30%), and then Tasks 2-15 (optional) be rated against each other for another portion of the costing evaluation (for the other 70%), or will the overall bottom line cost for each vendor be rated against each other? And if so, what if a vendor chooses not to submit costing for one or more of the optional tasks?

The offeror should develop the pricing and staffing schedule with the assumption that all tasks will be funded, delineating the pricing by task as instructed in the Cost Proposal section of the RFP. Accordingly, the costing evaluation will include all tasks.

40. Section: 3.6. Page: 45. Please confirm our assumption that Proposal hand and overnight deliveries will be made to Golden, Colorado.

Yes, your assumption is correct. Overnight deliveries should be made to the Golden, Colorado address provided in RFP Section 3.6, Task Order Proposal Contact Information.

41. Section: Appendix J. Have there been any test problems generated and solved by the researchers? Are those problems available to the bidders?

The only test problems generated and solved by the researchers to date have been academic in nature and would not advance the offeror's understanding of the model.

42. Section: Appendix J. Can the contractor develop a mathematical equivalent of the IP Model, particularly if the contractor can demonstrate the mathematical equivalency and the suitability of the mathematical equivalent for much more efficient solution, potentially using inexpensive and much simpler custom algorithms?

Contractors are encouraged to develop alternative approaches which would result in faster solution times and/or lower development and implementation costs.

43. Are we to use an existing fire simulator?

The fire simulator component of the FPA-PM application will read user inputs describing fuels, topography and weather and generate inputs for the optimization routine. The fire simulation will be based on the BEHAVE Fire Prediction Model (Anderson). (See www.fs.fed.us/fire/planning/nist, Application Information.) Routines for the fire simulation will be developed by the USDA Forest Service Rocky Mountain Research Station and will be provided to the successful bidder after task order award.

44. Is our simulation team expected to validate the existing fire simulation?

It would be prudent for the successful offeror to validate the fire simulation routines developed by the RMRS-FSL.

45. Is our team expected to build/rebuild any part of the existing fire simulation?

The contractor would be responsible for developing interfaces between the fire simulator routines and the FPA Preparedness Module.

46. Can we get sample data?

Sample data will be provided by the RMRS-FSL and the FPA Project Core Team to validate and test the fire simulator. Sample data can be provided at the time of task order award.

47. The Worksheet does not provide a column for any travel costs. Does the Government want the travel costs combined with material costs in the material column?

The government would like travel costs broken out in a separate column from material costs. We will provide a revised Cost Proposal Worksheet.